

Disposable Bag Reduction Options

May 15, 2012



Purpose



- To request Council direction on options for reducing disposable plastic and paper bag use in Boulder
- Including the type of approach and the scope of that approach.

Background



- Result of public participation and “Bag It Boulder” petitions
- October study session – Council requested options for reducing disposable checkout bag use

What's the Problem?



- Boulder currently uses an estimated 33.3 million checkout bags a year – 342/person/year
- Contributor to litter pollution
- Hard to recycle

Boulder County Recycling Facility



Boulder County Recycling Facility



Life Cycle Environmental Impacts

	Paper Bags (30% Recycled Fiber)	Polyethylene Plastic Bags
Total Energy Usage (MJ)	2,622	763
Fossil Fuel Use (kg)	23.2	14.9
Municipal Solid Waste (kg)	33.9	7.0
Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Tons)	0.08	0.04
Fresh Water Usage (Gal)	1,004	58

Evaluation Criteria



- Effectiveness in reducing disposable plastic and paper checkout bag use
- Minimizes costs to consumers
- Minimizes impact to consumer convenience
- Ease of implementation for businesses
- Minimizes costs to businesses
- Ease of enforcement
- Minimizes city organization resources needed to administer

Outreach



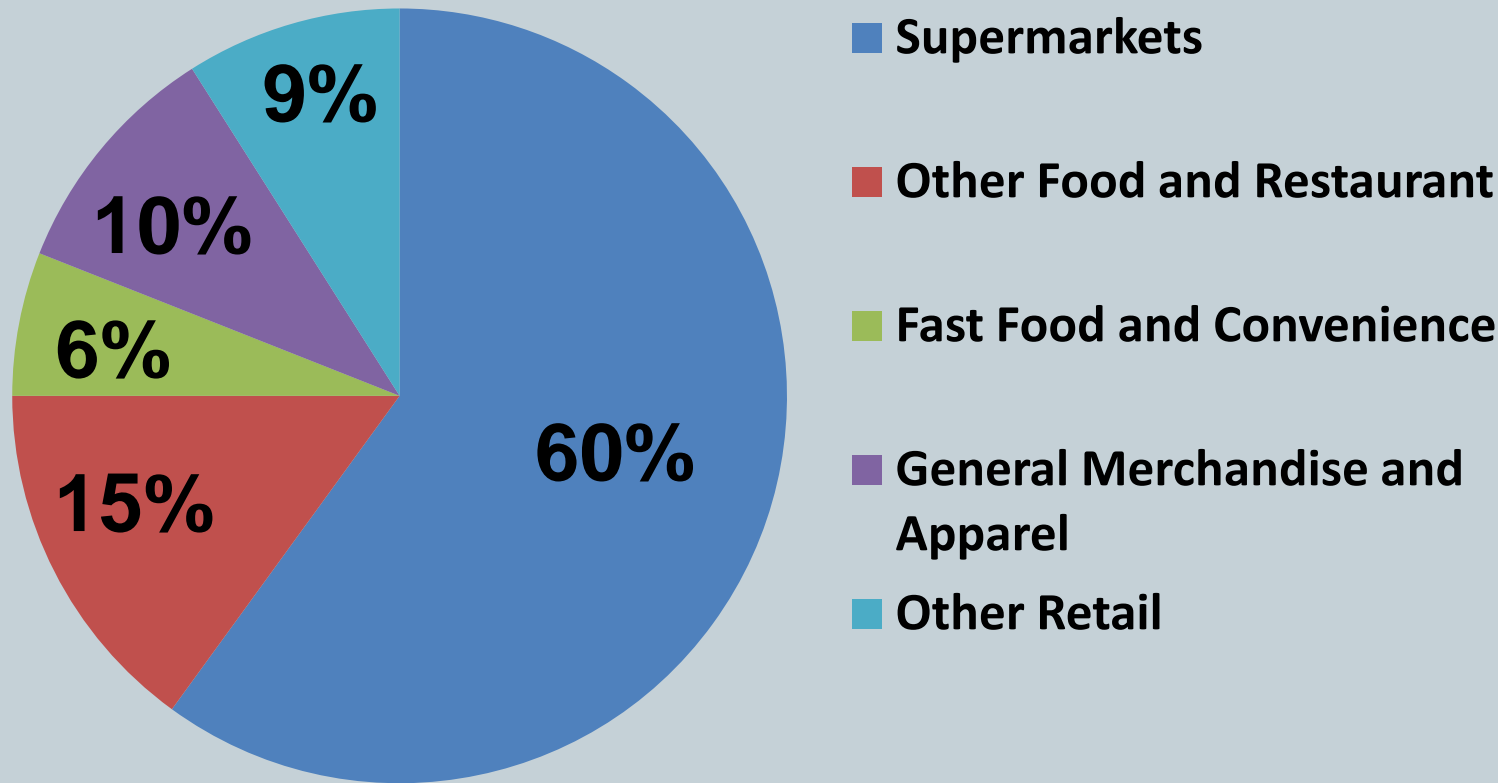
- Public outreach
- Other communities
- Large bag distributors
- Boulder Chamber team

Options



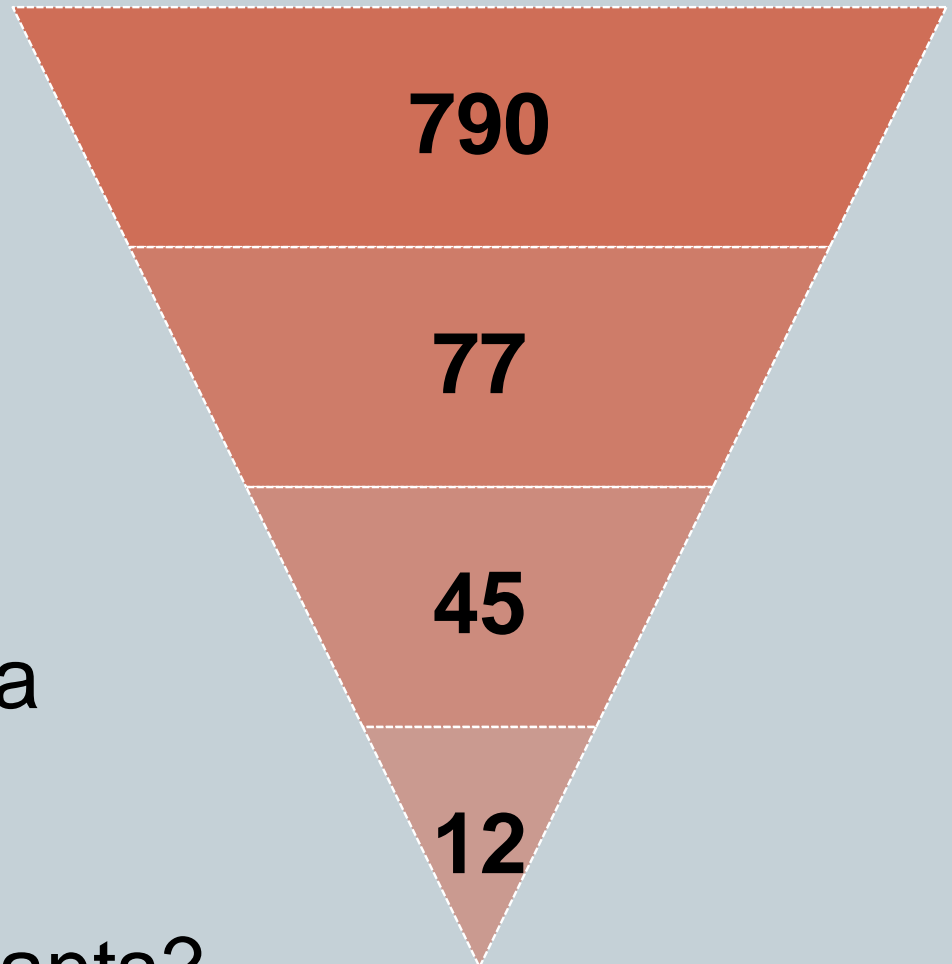
1. Fee on plastic and paper checkout bags
2. Ban on plastic bags with a fee on paper bags
3. Ban on plastic and paper bags
4. Educational campaign
5. No action

Disposable Bag Generation by Store Type



Scope of Possible Ordinance

1. All retail businesses
2. Retail businesses over a threshold
3. All food stores
4. Food stores over a threshold



➡ Include restaurants?

Staff Recommendation



- Fee on both plastic and paper checkout bags
- Applied to all food stores in the sales tax database (~45 businesses)

Next Steps



- Refinement of analysis
- Draft ordinance
- EAB recommendation on ordinance
- Council consideration of ordinance

Questions



- Does Council agree with the staff recommendation?
- Any additional suggestions?



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